

X
Perlegi hunc Tractatum, in
quo nihil reperto aut sane
Doctrinae aut bonis moribus contra-
rium, quo minus Imprimatur.

Ex Aedibus
Lambethanis
O^{ro}ob. 13.
1662.

Dan. Nicols.
R. P. D. Arch.
Cant. Capel.
Domesticus.



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Z. 16. THE *45*
SAINTS

Nearness to

GOD:

B. E. I. N. G

A Discourse upon
part of the CXLVIII.

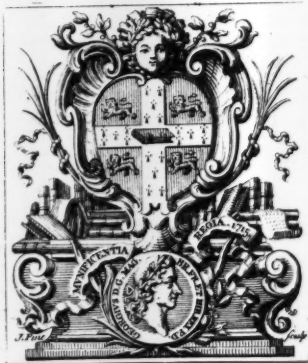
Psalm. Written at the re-
quest of a Friend.



By *Richard Vines* Late Minister
at *St Lawrence Jewry* in *London*.

Now published for the publick
good of the Church.

London, Printed by *A.M.* for *Francis Tyon* at
the three Daggers in *Fleetstreet*, 1662.




1582:90



TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
AND
Vertuous Patroness of Piety
THE
Lady *ELIZABETH*
Countess Dowager of *Exeter*
increase of all divine graces
and temporall blessings in
this life, and eternall glory
in the life to come.

Right Honourable,

 *the Queen of
Sheba was by
the fame of
Solomon's wisdoms
encouraged to take a
A 3 long*

The Epistle

long journey, to have the
personall sight and real
experience of those ex-
cellencies in him, where-
of she was before (upon
credit only) so great an
admirer: so I being a
stranger to your Person,
but invited by the re-
port of your Honours
Religious conversation
and good affection to-
wards pious and de-
vout persons, and all la-
bours effectually endea-
vouring to bring Chri-
stians unto an exact
rule

Dedicatory.

rule of holy living, do now presume to offer this Mite into the publick Treasury under your Noble Patronage, hoping the stamp of your acceptance and countenance will make it currant in the world, to whose censure it is exposed, and for whose sake it now comes forth a Posthumus after the decease of the Reverend Anthor, whose abilities and exemplary life were well known. And I was

The Epistle

therather moved here-
unto, upon consideration
of my own unworthiness
and unprofitableness in
the age I live in; and
that I am never likely
to advantage it so much,
as this small Treatise
may, although there be
more want of the pra-
ctice of Piety, than of the
works of those that ear-
nestly perswade to it.
And besides I thought it
incumbent upon me as a
debt due to the memory
of the Author, and satis-
faction

Dedictory.

faction of importunate friends, not to let this Tract written upon a solemn invitation and request of an Acquaintance, to be buried in oblivion; and that thereby God maybe glorified, his Church and servants furthered in their passage through the desert of this mortall life, towards the celestiall Canaan, and your Honour (whose affection and choice is with Mary in the Gospell set upon

The Epistle, &c.
*the better part and spiri-
rituall things) may reap
some content and re-
freshment therein, is the
earnest prayer and de-
fire of*

Your Honours

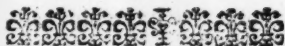
most humble Servant

and affectionate Orator

Octob. 6.
1662,

William Drury.

THE



THE
SAINTS
 Nearness to
G O D.

Pfal. 148. 14.

*A people near unto
 him.*



He Book of
Psalmes in
 the general,
 is a descrip-
 tion of the
estate and condition of a
 godly

godly man. In the beginning, we have him call'd a blessed man ; in the blessednesse of holinesse : and so going on in the wayes of righteousnesse, his estate in the end, is shut up in the happinesse of blessing and praise : For so the Book ends, as his life ends, in nothing but praise. Wherein *David* as it were, begins to tune his heart to that Song of praise, which he now sings for ever in Heaven. In many parts of the Book, walking in holiness, (and so carrying happinesse with him) we see him notwithstanding
meet

meet with many storms,
and tempests of evil : But
as it were, escaped from
all in the end, he bursts
forth in thanks. To put
into every like godly
mans mouth his Lesson
to conne, before the day
of consort in Heaven,
when nothing else shall
be sung, but praise, and
honour, and thanks. The
first part of this holy song
begins in the 145. *Psalm*. 1.
where first stirring up his
own heart to sing, and so
giving the pattern, as
Gideon said to his Soul-
diers ; *Look on me and do
likewise*, so in the end
saith he, *My mouth shall
speak*.

Speak the praise of the Lord, and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever. And from thence, every *Psalms* begins and ends with praise. Yea the last is praise throughout; nothing but praise, praise.

Among these hortatory *Psalms* to praise, is this our 148. And it is a general exhortation to all sorts of creatures in their kinds, to praise the Lord, whether they be things above, as Angels, the inhabitants of the first Heavens: or Stars and Lights of the next Heaven: or Clouds and Vapours,

Vers. 2.

Vers. 3.

Vapours, and Meteors, Verf. 7, 8.
which are in the lowest
Heaven : or else lower Verf. 9.
things, as Mountains and
Hills; living things, as
Trees, and Beasts, and
Foul : Together lastly Verf. 11,
with Men, of every con- 12.
dition and estate, for
whom all the former
were made. And this ex-
hortation is backt with a
trebble Reason : 1. Ta-
ken from the relation,
between God and the se-
veral sorts of creatures.
And, 2. That special ex-
cellency that is in God
himself. And, 3. From
his goodnesse to his peo-
ple. The first Reason is
laid

- Verf. 5. laid down in the 5. and 6. *Verses*, and it stands upon these two parts ; First, The creatures must praise God, because he is their Maker ; *He commanded and they were created.*
- Verf. 6. Secondly , Because he upholds them all being made, which is from his decree, that they shall not pass, *v. 6.*

- But in speciall men must give him praise. First, For his own excellency and glory in the
- Verf. 13. *13. verse.* which glory and excellency is most transcendent, even above all the excellency of the creature, above the earth and

and Heaven. Secondly,
For his goodnesse to his
people, which is in the
14. verse, which is in ex-
alting his people; *He ex-
alts the horn of his people,
the praise of all his Saints.*
And this people is set out
by their name who they
were, *The children of Is-
rael*; and by their inter-
est in him, *They are a
people near him.*

*He also exalts the horn
of his people, the praise of
all his Saints; even of the
children of Israel, a people
near him.* And so we are
come to the words.

The point of Obser-
vation we intend to han-
dle

dle out of these words is
only this :

*Doct. That Gods Saints, are a
people very near him.*

In the handling of this
point, we will shew

First, What nearnesse
is, or wherein it consists.
And

Secondly, In what re-
spects Gods Saints are
said to be near unto
him.

Nearnesse first is *Geo-
metrical*, and it is that lit-
tle space or distance be-
tween thing and thing,
from thence by a trope
or turning of the word,
it

it is used for any special relation between one thing and another.

1. There is a *Political* nearnesse; as first, the nearnesse of League or Confederacy between Nation and Nation. So *Solomon* was near to *Pharaoh* by Confederacy.

2. There is the nearnesse of Government, when Prince and People consent to govern and be governed together, which is a farther nearnesse.

Secondly, There is an *Deconomical* nearnesse, the nearnesse of a Servant and a Master, which is still a further nearnesse.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, There is an *Ethical* nearnesse, the nearnesse of friend to friend, which is yet nearer.

Fourthly, There is a *Logical* nearnesse: 1. The nearnesse of house and inhabitant. 2. The nearnesse of Relation or Kindred, of Sonne and Father, Wife and Husband. 3. And of similitude or likenesse, as of the picture to the person.

Fifthly, We have a *Physical* or *Natural* nearnesse, which is the highest degree of all others. As, 1. Of the branches to the tree. And, 2. Members

Members to the head.

Having drawn forth these particulars out of their severall places, we now will shew how Gods people are said to be near him.

1. Yet this is first to be premised, that there is a common nearnesse to God which is the nearnesse of the whole creature, namely, to him as he is omnipresent, whereby all the frame of the world lies near him, and in some sort touches him, he being in, and through, and above, and about all things.

A common nearnesse of creatures and men.

2. Again, there is a nearnesse

nearness to him in his Providence, which is that secret touch of his hand, whereby he sustains and preserves all things. In these two senses, not only his people, but all other men, and all things else, stones and trees, and the like, are said to be near him. And in the latter sense, we have it spoken of men out of the Church, *Act. 17. 27, 28* where *Paul* tells the *Athenians*, God was not far off them, because in him they live, move, &c. that is, he is their preserver; yea in this sense the very Devils are near him.

3. There

3. There is another farther degree of nearness which belongs to men, and that to those which are within the Park of the Church, a common nearness to Believers and Unbelievers.

A nearness of men in the Church.

The nearness of a common Covenant, and the signs of that Covenant; that nearness to him in his Ordinances, whereby God is more near to them, than other men out of the Church.

Nearness of common Covenant.

But this I take not to be the nearness here chiefly intended, though this be a prerogative of the Church worthy much

The near-
ness here
meant.

much thanks and praise.

The nearness here chiefly meant is a nearness belonging to Saints, as the words foregoing seem to import, and so some of our best Expositors give it, to be a peculiar proximity, which belongs to the people of God and no other, which strangers meddle not with, nor know.

But to shew wherein this nearness consists, which is in two things.

1. They are near him in faith.

2. In the work of faith.

First, They are near him in faith. The

The name and nature
of faith shews as much.

For faith is the rely-
ing upon God as mine in
Christ.

First, It is a relying.

And to this purpose is
it set out by trusting, and
staying, and rolling the
soul on God. Hence 1 Pet. 2. 7.
godly man is said to be
built on Christ, and root-
ed in him, which phrases
intimate thus much unto
us, that the Believer is as
near unto God having
faith in him, as a man is
to the thing on which he
leans, as the stone to the
ground on which it is
roll'd, as the building to
B the

the foundation, and the tree to the soil in which it stands and grows.

Again, It is the relying on God as mine] that is, the Believer is as near God by faith, as the possessor and the thing possessed, as the Land and the Lord, the house and the owner. Faith is of an appropriating nature, bringing God and whatsoever is in him unto the Believer.

As mine in Christ, for 'tis by him all our nearnesse is.

So that this nearnesse is in faith. Faith is as the *Jacobs Ladder*, whereby
his

his people ascend up, and
come near unto him.

And it hath in it these
eight rounds or degrees
of nearnesse.

1. A nearnesse of Co-
venant.

2. Of People to their
Prince.

3. Of Servant to his
Master.

4. Friend to Friend.

5. Of Child to Fa-
ther.

6. Of Spouse to Hus-
band.

7. Of Branch to the
Tree.

8. Of the Member to
the Head.

1. The nearnesse of

B 2 faith,

faith, is a nearnesse of
Covenant or League.

Before men believe
they are afar off, as ene-
mies and haters of God ;
so enemies in their minds
by wicked works. To

Rom. I. 30

Col. I. 21.

give a touch, They were
enemies, and enemies in
their minds, that is to say,
enemies in their minds,
by wicked works. All

Enmity is
in two
things.

enmity is compleat in
these two, in the mind
and in the work ; they
were both enemies in
mind and work, for the
word may be so render-
ed. And again enemies in
mind, by wicked works,
wicked works being the
cause

cause of this enmity of the mind. And therefore *Joh. 3. 20.* men are said to hate the light, because their works are evil; this by the way: so that men in sins are far off as enemies, not in League or Covenant. God in Jesus Christ offers conditions of peace: men when once they have faith, they then enter League, and therefore *Isa. 56. 4, 6.* 'tis a *Isa. 56. 4, 6* laying hold on the Covenant, that is, that which strikes the stroke, and reconciles God and man offended. Faith layes down the weapons, sins, that fought against God, and

B 3 layes

layes hold on mercy, the Covenant and League God offers to men, if they will be friends.

The whole Scripture shews this evidently, being indeed nothing else, but the Writings of the Covenant of faith between God and man. The old and new Testament are but the pair of Indentures or Covenants, the old being the first Bill or Covenant, which being once expired, is renewed in the new Testament, as a sign of this nearnesse.

2. The second step in this Ladder of faiths nearnesse,

nearnesse, is the nearnesse
of people and Prince, *Isa. 33. 22. The Lord is our* Nearnesse
of people
to King.
King, and he will save us;
so, we are his people, and
throughout the Prophets,
my people. Some choose
pleasure, others profit,
others credit, but the
Lord is their King.
Others they acknowledg
him not, nor do any ho-
mage to him, and there-
fore they are called Re-
bels, *Psal. 68. 18. because* Psal. 68.
18.
they have no faith: but
faith in Gods people
comes and takes the
Oath of Allegiance, and
swears them Gods peo-
ple, to say as *David* did,

B 4 I have

I have sworn, and I will perform to keep thy righteous statutes.

3. Gods people are
 Nearneffe. near unto him as a Ser-
 of Servant vant to a Master.

This is a step yet higher and nearer: that they are such whose office it is continually to wait and attend upon God. Faith puts upon them Gods Livery, that they are men of his own Cloth. And this service is not an Apprentiship, to serve their Master for a time, and then to go out Journeymen for themselves, but like the Servant in *Exod. 21. 5.* that liking

liking his Master well,
was to have his eare
boared through with an
Aule, and serve him for
ever : so because they
like their Master well,
because his service is per-
fect freedom; they take
him as it is *Luke 1. 75.*
To serve him for e-
ver.

Whereas contrary, o-
ther men are of another
living, servants of Satan
the Prince of this world.
Or at the best, their ser-
vice is but slavery, which
is a service of compulsi-
on.

They are no more his
servants than all other

B 5 things,

things, stones, and trees, and the like. Or as the *Assyrian*, *Isai. 10. 7.* *They acknowledg him not.* The *Assyrian* there was Gods servant, for saith the Text, *I will send him against an hypocritical Nation, &c.* Howbeit, he thinks not so, but to cut off Nations. God there sent him of his errand, to destroy, though he thought himself his own Master, and that he wrought for himself. So men, though they seem to be servants to God in doing his work, yet they in deed work for themselves as their own Masters. But
Gods

Gods people are near as
the Servant to the Ma-
ster.

And not only so ;

4. But fourthly, This ^{Nearnesse}
ladder of nearnesse of ^{of friends.}
faith, hath another high-
er step; The nearnesse of
friend to friend. They
are Gods friends, as *A-*
Abraham, 2. *Fam.* 23. so
Gods acquaintance, his
companions, and famili-
ars, *Acquaint thy self with* Job 22. 21.
him, &c. Nay they are
all the acquaintance, all
the familiars he hath in
the world.

Therefore men with-
out faith are called *stran-*
gers, that is, such as know ^{Eph. 4. 18.}
him.

him not, such as are not acquainted with him. They may indeed know his kindnesse, be acquainted with his mercy, as peace, and health, and riches; but him they know not, so as to be intimate and intimate with him, so as to call him friend, and to be called so by him, when Gods people are his friends.

5. Faith hath another step or farther degree of nearnesse, which is the nearnesse of kindred, they are his children.

Unbelievers may be retainers to him, such as hold their Lands and Priviledges

viledges by him, such as now and then attend on him, once or twice a year, at *Christmas* and *Easter*, or such like Festivities; but at the best they are but hired servants, *Luke* 15. 17. that is, such as serve for hire, for life, and safety. But they are nothing of a kindred to him, none of the children. Whereas Gods people are near unto him, and so near as of kindred, and so near of kindred as children.

As many as received Joh. 1. 12.
*him, to them he gave
power to be the Sonnes of
God, even those that be-
lieve*

lieve in his name. So in Esay 63. 16. Doubtlesse thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, &c. Faith there steps forth, and breaking through the clouds of Gods displeasure, challenges kindred of him calls him Father, and 'tis out of question, Doubtlesse thou art our Father.

Other men cannot say so, if they do, 'tis a telling God a lye to his face.

They are at the best but Bastards and no true Sonnes. Only such as in outward profession call
God

God Father: but they are illegitimate, born of the Joh. 1. 13. will of the flesh, and the will of man, and not of the will of God. Such whose new-birth is from the will of the flesh, or the will of man. Their shew of godlinesse and seeming holinesse, is at the best but of the will of the flesh, of themselves and for themselves, for their own good and safety, being stird up, and acted, and ended by the flesh, and in the flesh: or of the will of man, that is, 'tis a profession and seeming holinesse, because men would have them

them to be holy, for the will of such a friend, Father, or the like, to satisfie men. As if the Evangelist should have said, All that go under the name of Sonnes and call God Father, they are of three sorts, two are Bastards and no Sonnes, such as are born of the will of the flesh, such as professe for the satisfying of the flesh, the self-deceiving and closest Hypocrite, which is no son though he think so : because he looks onely to himself. The other is he that is born of the will of man, that lives only to the

the will of man, the grosse and notorious Hypocrite. But the third is the true Sonne indeed, which is born of the will of God, of his own will, and that obeys him for his will. But enough of this, which I note more by the way than otherwise: this then is the fifth ascent or gradation in the Ladder of Faiths nearnesse, That Gods people are his children.

6. The sixth degree of higher nearnesse, is the nearnesse of Spouse to the Husband: so in Cant. we have it *My Spouse*. All besides them, are such

such as goe a whoring from him, and are married to others, to pleasure and credit, and the things of this world : and therefore, they having tryed themselves formerly to God, and broke the marriage knot, are called

James 4. *James 4. 4. Adulterers and Adulteresses, because they defile the marriage Bed by the love of the Creature : But Gods people are married to him by faith.*

7. Gods people are near him, as the branch to the tree, and 'tis also another nearnesse of faith.

Rom. 6. *Thou standest by faith,*
that

that is, that thou standest
in the tree Jesus Christ:
'Tis thy faith that makes
thee a branch; that's the
sap and juyce which runs
from the tree, to make
thee live near him as a
branch: otherwise, thou
wert but a wilde Olive,
or a dead branch of the
tree. 'Tis your faith lets
you into the tree, and
makes you a Scyon.

8. Lastly, The high-
est step of this Ladder of
faiths nearnesse, is of the
Members to the head, so Eph. 4.
Christ is called the head. 15.
That as all the members
are united and joyned to
the head, in sense and
motion

motion from it; so Christ is the head, we the members, nearly united to him, in all power of knowing and doing.

This is the nearnesse of faith, which as a Ladder, consists of these eight steps of nearnesse, and every one of them still higher, and so nearer God. The nearnesse of Subject, is greater than that of League; Servant than Subject; Friend than Servant; Childe than Friend; Wife than Childe; Branch out of the same Tree, and in the same Tree, than the Wife. And lastly, The Member

Member is more essential, and so nearer than the Branch. So much for the first part of this nearnesse, *The nearnesse of Faith.*

2. But secondly, As Gods people are near him by having faith in their hearts, by these many proximities; so they are near him in the work of faith, which is, *The nearnesse of Holinesse*, which is the bringing of the whole man to God: So that if Gods people touch him, not onely in Relations, (as I formerly shewed) but in the whole man, and that which proceeds

Part of
nearnesse
in the
work of
faith,
which is
holinesse.

ceeds from it, if they touch him on all parts, then are they a people near him. Other men as they come not near him in any relations more than stones and trees, or little more, having no faith to spread these relations over them : so having no faith, they have nothing of holinessse, nothing but sinne, which turns them away from God, that they come not near him, so much as to give him a look, so as to give him a word, if unawares they meet him in his Ordinances. But

Holinesse,
what it is.

Gods people are near him

him in holinesse, which is the new casting of the whole man in the mould of faith, to the mind of God. And this is the greatest nearnesse of all other, for this more properly concerns God. Faiths nearnesse is a nearnesse to God for our selves, to make us safe: but holinesse is a nearnesse to God for himself, first, and then for our selves. Faith sets us under the covert of Gods love, to shelter of wrath: But holinesse makes us like unto God, to restore our first perfection we lost in *Adam*: and this is the

the thing God intends in the working of faith, to restore us by holinesse.

Now Gods people are near (in a double respect) in holinesse.

1. In the holinesse of Heart.

2. In the holinesse of Life.

First, They are near him in the holinesse of heart, which is a breaking down the partition wall of sinne, or taking away the distance made by sin, and a partaking of the like nature with God himself.

Nearnesse
of similitude.

1. Hence first they are said to be like God,
near

near him by the nearnesse of similitude. The holinesse of the heart being the new Coyning or Stamping of the Image of God upon the heart; or the new drawing of the Image of God, in the colours of holinesse, upon the heart. That as we say, such a picture is very near, meaning the man it represents: look on him and the picture together, and they are very like; so look on that tablet of the heart, wherein the Pencil of faith, in the Hand of God, hath Drawn in the colours of holinesse the
C Image

Image of God, and they are very near, very like.

On the contrary, a man on whose heart faith hath not stamp't this holinesse, is no liker God than darknesse the Sun; there is not so much as the first draught of his Image. And therefore you see no more of the Image of God in his heart, than of the image of a man in a beast. But faith bringing holinesse into the heart, makes Gods people of his Image, face answering to face, by wiping out the draught of Satan.

Therefore 1 *Joh.* 3. 3.
Who.

Whosoever hath this hope in him, purifies himself as he is pure : that is, faith draws a Coppy of holinesse in the heart, like to that which is in God ; faith boiles up to such a holinesse as he hath. When faith comes, it sweeps the heart of the dirty corners of sinne, which made God before to be a farre off ; but when sin is swept, then comes in another nearnesse.

2. The nearnesse secondly of a Temple, and house : then the heart is consecrated Gods Chappel, when the rubbish and

dirt of sin is first purged away.

And therefore 'tis said,
 1 Cor. 3. *The Temple of God is ho-*
 17. *ly, whose Temple ye are,*
 that is, when once ye
 come to be holy, then
 ye are made Temples of
 God.

Eph. 3. 17. So also Gods house,
 the place of his continual
 nearnesse to them; that
 look as a man is near his
 house, and nearer that
 than any thing else, so
 God and a holy heart are
 near, and nearer than
 any other. Nay the holy
 heart is all the dwelling
 God hath below. He hath
 no other house than his
 people;

Esay.

Rom. 8. 9.

people; no other rooms in his house, than their several hearts; no other parlour or room of delight, than that heart which is best adorned and hanged with grace, that is most holy. And this is not a house which stands empty of the inhabitant; but 'tis a house whereof he saith, as he said of the Temple, *Here will I dwell for ever, for I have a delight in it.* But farther, as they are near to God in the holinesse of heart, so also

Secondly, In the holinesse of life, whereby they live to him, *Gal. 2.*

Near in holiness of life.

19. and so they are said to live with him, and to walk with him, that is, they are such, whose lives reach to him, and end in him. And so they live with him, that is, they make him their acquaintance indeed; as before we shewed they had the title of friends. They be not only called friends, but they live as friends, once friends and ever so, such as are never parted or severed. Therefore this nearnesse of life is exprest by walking with

Gen. 5. 24. *God; Enock walked with God*, that is, he was as near God in his life, as a man

man is to him with whom he walks, he went even with him, walkt not a farre off from God, but close to him, side by side, as we may so say.

Other men that have no faith, live a farre off from God, as men of another Country, as acquainted only with sinne and the world, to whom and with whom they live. But Gods people are a people near him, in their lives.

They are near him first in their thoughts, so near him therein, that their thoughts are said to be

C 4 upon.

upon him; *Mal. 3. 16.*
Those that thought upon
his name. So David, no-
thing more ordinary than
thoughts on God, so that
Psal. 63. he was his *Meditation*,
which is the staying and
continuance of the
thought on the thing.

So again in their will
and affections, their
Love, Hope, Joy, Fear,
is said to be of him and in
him. In desire they fol-
low hard after him, *Psal.*
63. 8. yea getting once
near him, they *cleave*
to him, *Deut. 4. 4.*
which cleaving is chiet-
ly by love and joy,
so all their words and
deeds

deeds are to him.

Lastly, They are near him in their services, for faith makes them not only Officers in his Court, but to wait and attend upon him, to follow the Court, and attend in their courses of service, in all the times of worship; yea, to be such as stand continually before him, to be of his Presence-Chamber, and at his elbow.

Nearnesse
in their
lives by
serving
him.

Whereas others either live from his Court, or are banisht the Court, serving Sin, the World, and Satan; or if they come to Court to

C 5 tender

tender their service; they set their hearts another way, as false servants which do homage in heart to other Lords than their own, when they are in the Court.

So these when they stand in Gods Courts, seeming to serve him, their hearts attend in the Court of Satan, the Prince of this world. Therefore they are said to honour him with their bodies, their hearts being farre from him, *Isai.* 29. 13. farre from him, in the word, farre from him in prayer, or any other service of his.

But

But Gods people are
near unto him in all their
service; they are near
unto him in the Word,
as the Apostle; they 1 Thes. 2.
receive it as the Word 13.
of God, not of men:
as if he should say, there
are two sorts of hear-
ers of the Word, some
hear it only as the Word
of man, man teaching,
man instructing, man
exhorting or reproving,
&c. but you receive it
as the Word of God.
Faith makes them to
hear God in his Word,
other men neither see,
nor hear any thing of God
in it.

But

But as it was with
A^{ct}.9.7. *Saul* and his company
travelling to *Damascus*,
so are godly men, and
other men. As *Saul* and
his company were going
to *Damascus*, 'tis said, a
voice was heard from
Heaven, *Saul, Saul, why
persecutest thou me?* and
the men with him, they
heard the voice, but they
saw no man, only *Paul*
saw *Jesus Christ*, the
others did not. So wicked
men hear the sound of
the Word, but they see
no man; they see not *Je-
sus Christ* and *God* in his
Word; for 'tis only the
eye of faith that sees *God*
in

in the Prospective of his Word and Ordinances.

And therefore though men have these Prospectives of his Ordinances, yet they see not God in them, because they want the eye of faith to unite them and God together.

So again Gods people are near unto him in the Sacrament, which so oft as it is worthily received, is a new Bond out of the great Court of Heaven, to tye them and God together more nearly ; and 'tis faith that writes this Bond, and seals it in the blood of Jesus Christ.

Whereas other men
are

are no nearer God in the Sacrament, than they are at their own table; nay 'tis a Sacrament of sepe-ration, that even unglues them from their common nearnesse in common mercy: for as it is an ascent which by worthy receiving makes men a step nearer to God, so by unworthy partaking they go lower to evil, and farther from him.

Thirdly, They are near to God in prayer; for so prayer in Scripture is commonly called a drawing nigh to God: and therefore they are said to be Priests to God; that

that as Kings and great ones have their Chaplains for them, so the people of God are his Chaplains, yea Chaplains in Ordinary, such as wait continually on God; and that not only for themselves, but for others also.

• That look as Kings have their Masters of Requests, whereby the Petitions of suiters are preferred unto them; so Gods people are his great Masters of Requests, whereby Petitions of each other, yea and wicked men also are preferred to him. So *Abraham* was the great Master of Requests

Rev. 2. 6.

Gen. 20. 7.

17.

quests for King *Abimelech*, Let *Abraham* pray for thee, and thou shalt live, &c.

Job 42. 7, 8. So *Job* was the Master of Requests for his three friends. So *Moses* for the *Israelites*.

And this is faith still that makes this nearness.

Faith is that which perfumes their prayers with the blood of Christ, and so they ascend up to God, and are accepted by him.

That as great persons choose still perfumed things, as apparell and Gloves, &c. let the other
alone,

alone, because the perfume makes them acceptable; so faith makes their prayers acceptable to God, which else they would not be.

Lastly, And so we have done with these severall branches of nearnesse.

The last nearnesse to God, which is in his speciall Attributes.

Gods people are near him in his speciall Attributes.

They are near his presence, and in his favour. Others are like *Abfalom*, which might not see the Kings face.

Or at the best God frowns upon them.

They are near his eye.

Near

Psal. 34. 15

Near his ear.

And so near his hand,
that when danger is at
hand, he is at hand, and
puts forth his hand to
help, and faith takes him
by the hand, and gets out.

Near the
Trinity.

So I might shew how
they are near the Trini-
ty.

The Father, Son, and
holy Spirit, which are
(with all in them) most
properly theirs.

If then by faith in it
self they are near unto
God in that eight-fold
nearnesse

Of

Of {
 Covenant,
 Subject,
 Servant,
 Friend,
 Child,
 Spouse,
 Branch,
 Member.

And again in the work
 of faith, which is holinesse

Of {
 Heart, } Like God.
 as his } Tem-
 } ple.
 } House.

Of {
 Thoughts,
 Affections,
 Speeches,
 Life in } Actions.

Service {
 Word,
 Sacraments
 Prayer, &c.

If

If near him in his speciall Attributes ;

And to all the Trinity ;

Then they are a people very near him.

Object. But to all this it may be objected: How then may some say doth it come to passe, that God is said to

Psal. 101.

Stand afar off?

To hide himself, as

David and many of Gods people complain?

Answ.

It thus falls out sometimes, with these near ones; but this is, when they themselves go away from God by sinne, where God is not. And therefore

therefore God may there
be said, to be a far off:
Because sinne is a place
where God is not, or
ever was near to them
in it, as continuing in it,
but only he is near them,
as coming out of sinne,
so farre as they are sinne-
full, so farre is God re-
mote from them; he
comes no farther into the
heart than faith purifies
it, into no rooms of the
soul, but those that
by faith are swept from
sinne.

2. Again, though God
seems to stand a farre off,
and to hide himself, that
we think him not near:
yet

Gen. 28. yet as *Jacob* said, He
 27. was nigh and he not aware of it; so God is near his people, when they think not of it: even as the father is taken by the child for gone, when he is but behind the hangings.

3. Thirdly, God is many times near, and actually helps when we think he is not, and doth not, because we look for him, in a way of our own prescribing, wherein he will not come.

Double
 way of
 help.

There is a double way wherein God comes to his people.

First, An ordinary
 way

way, or the Kings highway, the great roade of Providence and Mercy, wherein he ordinarily is nigh them, as helping them in ordinary means.

There is secondly a secret privy way or path, wherein he comes sometimes, and is at us, before we are aware of it; and so we think him not come, because not in the common roade, wherein we expected him. Thus many times God is near in giving some other mercy than we ask, as more fit for us. Thus sometimes he gives not it may be wealth, but friends,

Jam. 5. 16.

friends, or we it may be look to have a lust healed by fasting and prayer, when they, nor any so common means do it not, but he heals it by confession of it to a godly friend.

4. Though God stand a far off, yet he then is near, though not sensibly, yet really and truly; the essence of the nearness remains still, though the sense and influence be somewhat cut off: even as it is with the body of the Sun, when 'tis covered with a Cloud, the body of the Sun is then as near, as when the
Cloud

Cloud was not before it, though the heat and light, the influence were somewhat cut off. A man is still as near the Sun in a cloudy day, as a clear day; so a man is as near God, that once is truly near him, even when he hides himself under a cloud of trial, as before. The relation for the substance holds as firm, as a son is as much a son, when he is a thousand miles off from his father, as when he is in the same room, in his fathers presence; so a son of God, is as much a son, for the essence and truth of the relation, and

D as

as much a spouse, when God is hidden from him under the distance of affliction, as when he was joyous and at peace. The covenant is the same, the kindred the same, the nearnesse the same. Even as the branches are as near the tree at one time as another, though they perceive it not. The members are as near the head, in a Palsey or Apoplexy, as at other times, though they feel it not, so fully or plainly as at other times they may. **And 'tis to be observed,** that in such cases as this *of David*; God is not quite

quite departed ; for sayes he, *Why standest thou a farre off*, which argues, God then was not out of sight, or out of call, though not so near as before.

Now we come to Application.

First then, If Gods Use 1. people are so exceeding near him, the Use shall be that in the Text, the words foregoing, *That God greatly exalts the horn of his people*. Is not this an exultation, when others are left out of all these forenamed relations, that they should be taken in; to be in

D 2 Cove-

Covenant with him, yea servants, yea friends, yea sonnes, yea his spouse: Come and see if there be any honour like unto this honour wherewith he cloathes his people, and which strangers meddle not with.

Use 2.

If it be so, Then touch not Gods anointed and doe his people no harme: wrong them not (as *Ecclesiastes* saies of the King) so much as in thy thought: much lesse proceed to open wrong, or persecution against them.

Mot. I.

For first consider, he to whom they are so near,

near, shall be sure to hear of it. Did any man but think, the wrong he doth to his fellow subject, the King should be sure to hear it, would not he hold his hands and consider?

There is not the least wrong thou canst doe to any of these near ones; but God shall be sure to hear of it.

They have friends enough in the Court of Heaven to tell him, yea those of his Presence-Chamber, the Angels, such as stand continually before him, such as are sent Embas-

D 3 sadours,

fadours, on purpose to see what wrong is done to them. Such as lie Lieger, to hear and carry the least word spoken against his people; and they will tell tales of you.

Besides they themselves are at the Kings eare, and in prayer will go and tell him of you. That if Angels and Saints which are all the Court of Heaven, if they or any of them know of it, God shall be sure to hear it.

Met. 2. But secondly, You shall be sure to hear of it again, for if they be the near ones, then whatsoever this nearnesse can do,

do, shall come to their aid and their confusion. It is the only way, to pull the world about a mans ears ; to provoke the Lord-General of the world, to Muster up his Batallions, and Hoasts of creatures against thee ; to cause Heaven and Earth, and the Commander of both, to turn enemies to thee, and in their courses to fight against thee, as the Stars in their courses did against *Sisera*. If then any man dare bid God, and his Armies of creatures battail, let him give but the defiance to his people, and the word

is no sooner spoken, but they are all up in Armes, and come marching, like *Febu*, furiously against thee. Ten several Armies of creatures, we see leavied, and sent against the *Egyptians* and *Pharaoh*, for the wrong done to the *Israelites*. And Army being sent after Army, in the end, (fully to revenge the wrong,) God Mustred up the Waters, causing them to lye in ambush against him; and when they

Exod. 14. were once come into the
 26. ambush, the Watch-word was but given, and the lyers in waite set upon them,

them, and overthrew
 them. So the Sun and Jos. 10.
 the Moon by standing
 still, were made as spies
 to betray, and a showre
 of stones like a Volley of
 shot to destroy the *Cana-*
anites. Wild-fire out of 2 King. 1.
 the Camp of Heaven,
 destroyed the Captains
 and their fifties that came
 to take *Elijah*. The Numb. 16.
 earth undermin'd *Korah* 31, 32.
 and his company, for
 their words against *Mo-*
ses.

Besides these, God
 hath an Army of diseases,
 which sometimes is sent
 to revenge his people.
 When God shall muster.

D 5

up

up the humours, of a mans own body against him, making his enemies to be those of his own household, such enemies as will not turn back; against whom, all the munition of Physick cannot defend; such enemies as will not raise their seige, nor make any composition, but assault, and in their assault, beat down the Ramparts and Fortifications of nature, taking the strong Castle of the heart, and lay the Fort of the whole man in the dust, even with the ground; so that if you can abide the brunt
against

against Heaven and Earth, and the several ranks of Souldiers, of creatures of the Lord of Hosts. If you have provision enough against a seige of judgements; if Armour of Proof to bear off the Bullet of Destruction shot from the Engine of Vengeance. If you dare stand against Gods great Ordnance, his sore judgements of Plague, Famine, or the like, (which mowes whole Cities and Nations down as the Sithe doth Corn;) Then speak and wrong, and spare not. But alas you know, all the

the Armour wherein ye can trust, is but Paper-Armour to defend you; that all the things you can flye to, are but the creatures, which are Souldiers of the Lord of Hosts, which therefore will not prove disloyal to their Lord, to flye from their Colours, for your service and Pay, but be the very first, even in the Fore-front of the Battel against you.

Use 3. But thirdly, Do them all the good you can. For

Mot. 1. First, You hold all you have upon them. Heaven and Earth would be dissolved,

solved, did not the Church uphold them; and were that once finisht, all things would fall again to their first confusion.

As 'tis in the erecting of a building, stones and timber, and other materials are prepar'd, Workmen are hir'd, and the tooles are moving, till the Edifice is reard, and when once the building is finisht, the stones and rubbish are cast aside, the tooles laid down, the Workmen paid and sent away, but they had their hire from the building: So in the building of the Church,

Church, workmen are
hir'd, tooles used, and
the building being up,
creatures and wicked
men(used for the Church)
are paid with peace and
wealth, and so cashired;
but they had their pay
(the good things of this
life) from the Church.
You hold all you have on
the Church; these near
ones are they, on whom
you hold all; they are
the great Lords, on whom
you hold your lives and
goods. As *Lot* was the
Lord, on whom the *Sodomites*
held both their
City and safety. And
therefore when he was
gone,

gone, he took safety with him, and destruction suddenly followed on them. They are your great Charter, by which you hold all your priviledges, and therefore make much of them.

Do them all the good *Mot. 2.* you can, for you are sure to be sure to be requited. God will never send any away empty, that shews kindnesse to his people. Not a Cup of cold water to a Disciple; not a Farthing given to a Saint, that shall not be requited in a Pound; not a Meale to Gods needy, that shall not be rewarded with a plentiful

plentifull Crop, a liberal Table. Not a Seed, a Corn of kindnesse, sown on these near ones, that shall not come up, in a plentifull ear, of a hundred fold blessing. The people of God is the fattest soyle to sow kindnesse in, they yield the greatest increase, the fullest reward.

Use 4.

If they are so near unto God, then get into their acquaintance, and forsake not their fellowship.

*Double
Motive.*

There are but two causes that make men seek the acquaintance of those which are near great

great persons. First, Because they are men of better rank and quality than others. Secondly, Because they are able by their nearnesse to do for them.

These are first men of *Mot. I.* the best rank and quality, and they are able to do more for you, than all the world beside. These are men of the best rank, if ye consider their descent. Others are but earth-born and sin-born, these are of the family of Heaven.

Again, They are of the best quality, because such as bear all the great Offices

Offices in the Court of Heaven.

Others may have the name of common Subjects, but they bear none of the Offices.

God dares not trust them; they would only bear Offices, to bear the credit and gain.

But Gods people bear the Offices in his Court.

First, They are of his Privy Councill, to know his mind.

Pfal. 25.
14.

Other men know his works, as his works of mercy, and his works of justice, but his mind, his secret, they know not. Even as the works of a King,

King, his Laws and Proclamations, or the like, any Subject knows, but his mind, his secret, that only his Council knows. So the works of God every man can take notice of, but his mind, they only know which are near of his Council. They know his mind in sin, to be out of measure sinfull, his mind in grace, to be so free and transcendent. They only know his mind.

They are again the Stewards of his Household; *Stewards of the manifold grace of God*, 1 Pet. 4. 10. 4. 10.

There

There are many wants, as there are many of his house, therefore many graces. And because every one hath not all grace, therefore are they Stewards mutually each to other, that every one might have that which is lacking in his faith, and humility, &c. And this they do as Stewards, dispensing out of the Kings store, out of the store of grace, received from him; dispensing in instruction, dispensing in reproof, and comfort, and the like, which is Christian communion, which is the communicating

ting of grace each to other.

And as they are Gods Stewards, so they are his Treasurers.

They keep all his riches. They are the treasurers of his Word and Ordinances, wherein all his estate is layed up. They are the keepers of his Jewels, precious faith, and the rest. They are the treasurers of mercy and judgement, who can by the Key of prayer in the hand of faith, shut or open the door of mercy, and take out what they will. Take out rain, or drought (as *Elijah*) take out peace
or

or war, life or death: all is in the keeping of his people who are his Treasurers.

Secondly, As they are men of the best rank and quality, so they are able to do for you. Have you any suit to be preferred to the King, what readier way than to use such who are so near him? A friend in the Court may do more you know, than all the friends you have beside. A friend in the Court of Heaven may get you more, than all the world besides. We see it in *Moses*, who saved the life of a whole Nation

Numb. 14.
12, 13, &c.

on

on by his suit to God,
when at once he would
have destroyed them.
He may get you life, or
health, or any thing.

The next Use shall be
for Triall. That if Gods
people be so exceeding
near him ;

Then let every one *Use 5.*
try whether they are so
near to God or no.

First, Whether are
you near him in a right
Covenant or no ? If so,
then you have joyned
your self to the Lord, *in Jer. 50. 5.*
a perpetuall Covenant
that shall not be forgotten.

There are three things
here to be observed : *Three*
things.

I, It

1. It is such a Covenant, wherein they joyn themselves to the Lord.

2. 'Tis perpetuall.

3. 'Tis not forgotten.

First, It is such a Covenant, wherein they joyn themselves to the Lord: that is, such a one wherein they are halfe with God, where they strike with God, as well as God with them. Many there are with whom God hath passed his Covenant, which are in the bounds and territories of the Covenant, which never yet joyned with God in the Covenant. Many are

are in the heat and benefit of the Covenant, which have not layed hold on the Covenant, and truly tyed themselves to God in it. But they which are in the right Covenant, are such as have joyned themselves to God, as he is joyned to them.

Secondly, It is a perpetuall Covenant. It is not a truce which lasts for a time, and then ends in open hostility; for such are the Covenants of many, which like enemies brought to an exigent, make truce for a time, which ends in war. So they being brought to an

E exigent

exigent in credit, come to the Sacrament, that men might not speak ill of them, or on the bed of sicknesse, or such like, make truce with God, but it ends in war, in sin again.

But the right Covenant is a perpetual Covenant, that is, not only such a one as is of perpetual force and tye only, but also such a one as is intended to perpetuity, and 'tis their earnest desire to keep it for ever. And 'tis such a Covenant as being once made, they will repent it, though they loose by it.

Loose

Loose their lusts, and in them the world, which is wrapt up in lusts, as meat in the stomack. Loose themselves also, that is, deny themselves; some go so far as to make Covenants, and intend them to perpetuity; but when they are urged to perform the conditions, and let all goe for naked Christ, and a Kingdom only in reversion; they flye off from their bargain as too hard. But the right Covenant is a perpetual Covenant, such as they stand to through the attendance of unavoidable crosses and enemies.

E 2 Thirdly,

Thirdly, It is a Covenant which is not forgotten. Men oft go so far, as to make Covenants for ever, but they forget them.

As mens evidences covered over with dust, or thrown into a corner, are out of sight, and so forgotten, so Covenants with God are covered over with sin, or thrown into a corner, a corner of the world, pleasure, or profit, or credit, and so are forgotten.

Hast thou not made a Covenant with God, which is forgotten? that some lust or other hath made

made thee quite forget it,
as if no such thing had
been: if thy Covenant be
right, 'tis such a Covenant
as is not forgotten.

The next signe of a *2. Sign.*
Covenant-right, is, that
where that is, there are
mutual passages of love
and kindnesse, as com-
merce and traffique; so
'tis between the soul and
God in Covenant. Then
as God presents thee
with mercy, life, peace,
friends; presents with
grace, and the pearl
Christ Jesus, lockt up in
the Cabinet of the Pro-
mises, thou canst not but
say as *Peter* said to the

E 3. lame

lame man asking an alms,
Such as I have I give thee, though Silver and Gold have I none; grace nor glory, my goodnesse extends not to thee, yet I give thee my self, my thoughts, affections, and all I have: I present thee my prayers, and thanks and service. Dost thou trade with him in duty, as he traffiques with thee in mercy? Hath he made thy heart, his great staple of merchandize, to exchange continually duty for mercy? it is a sign thou art in Covenant with him. On the contrary, dost thou get what thou

thou canst from him, without leave, without praying for them: take things by force, health, wealth, and the like; not paying any thing, any service, not custome, so much as the least deserved service, it is a sign of one out of Covenant; for only an enemy out of league, will rob a Common-wealth, or take things by force.

Lastly, If thou art in league with God, then thou hast common friends and foes with him. Gods friends are thy friends, and his foes thy foes, *Do not I hate*

*Psal. 139.
21, 22.*

E 4 *them*

Pfal. 97.
10.

them that hate thee, &c.
yea thou hatest sin, and
the fuel and bellows of
sin, the world, and Satan
which feeds and blows
up sinne. A man in Co-
venant hates sinne. Men
hate the sting, and love
the Serpent, hate sin as
'tis attended with Hell
and death, but love the
sin it self. Doest thou
therefore hate sin? thy
worldly mindednesse, or
pride, or uncleannesse, or
whatsoever it be? so dost
thou hate sinners, as
steeped in sin, as enemies
too to thy inner man?
So again, hast thou com-
mon friends with God, to
love

love where God loves,
and as far as he loves?
to love the very sight and
shew of holinesse, the
name of a godly man?
And doest thou love eve-
ry thing that may con-
firm and continue the
League, the Ordinances
betwixt God and thee,
though never so contrary
and crosse to thy corrupt
nature? it is then a sign,
thou art in Covenant
with God.

The second signe is
from the second degree
of nearnesse, the near-
nesse of Subject. Whe-
ther art thou as a Subject
of Gods or no? if thou

E 5

art.

Pfal. 119.
33,34.

art a true Subject, then thou obeyest his Laws and Proclamations; then art thou confined in thy wayes, within the precincts of his Laws, so as to do thy indeavour to keep them, even all of them, with thy whole man, and that for ever. Then all his Laws stand in force upon thy whole man, till they are cal'd in, by a new Act of the Court of Parliament of Heaven. Thou endeavourest also to keep the least Commandment, and doest not remain a wilfull breaker of it, though it might get thee never.

never so much.

Again, Thou obeyest his Proclamations, every promulgation of his will, or any Law, that by ill custome, is ready to be antiquated and abolisht. Every new duty commanded by his high Commission, his Ministers, whose office it is, to beat down new up-rising enormities, by dispeirring his Proclamations, and fastening them upon the posts of mens hearts, upon their consciences being faulty herein.

Whether again art *3. Sign.*
thou near unto God, as a
servant.

servant is to his Master?
 If thou art a servant of
 his, then thou art faith-
 full unto him in all his
 house, *Heb. 3. 2.* 'Tis re-
 quired in a servant that
 he be found faithfull as
Moses was in all his
 house.

First, Whether art
 thou faithfull? and faith-
 full all his house?

First, Art thou faith-
 full? dost thou attend
 upon him, and upon no
 other? There are many
 in service with God, that
 go for Christians, and
 wear his Livery, when
 their hearts attend upon
 Satan and the world.

Many

Many are bodily conversant about him in Prayer and the Word, whose hearts are left behind in the world and lusts.

Again, They work not for him but themselves, and so steale from him that which is his. He is an unfaithfull servant, that steals from his Master that which is his. Men steal thus from God, they steal from him his time; his time of praying, his time of hearing, and reading, and meditating, and examining their hearts, and lives, and his time of receiving the Sacrament, &c. and give
it

it to others, to profanefle, give it to pride, and worldly-mindednefle. They steal from him also his Talents, wit, strength, beauty, health, riches, and give them to lusts and finnes.

Art thou

Secondly, Faithfull in all his house, to do all that his service requires. Faithfull in regard of the Master, to do all that concerns his person, not one duty alone but all, not only to tell him of things amisse in praying to him; but also to hear him telling thee thy duty, and obeying, hear-
ing

ing his word, and observing it. Not only attending at his Table, in coming to the Sacrament; but also in loosing a meal, in fasting, when his service requires it, and so every other day.

So faithfull in regard of thy fellow servants, in helping and assisting them in their work, in exhorting, and encouraging them in well-doing; in instructing them also, and admonishing them when they erre and do amisse.

Faithfull in regard of all other things in the house; Art thou then
faith-

faithfull to thy Master,
and faithfull in all his
house, so as all his work
is performed? then art
thou near him as a ser-
vant. Contrary, art thou
sloathfull, idle, wronging
thy Master, in his goods
and time, and wronging
thy fellow-servants? then
art thou no servant of
his, but a servant of thy
self.

4. Whether art thou
one of the friends of God
or no?

If thou art a friend of
his, Then first thou lov-
est him for himself; thou
lovest him for his purity
and holinesse, and excel-
lency;

I. Pro-
perty of a
friend.

lency; because he is so, and not for that he hath. Thou lovest not his, but him, for that is friendship to love a man for himself.

Many there are that pretend friendship to him, and seem as if they loved him: But it is, because he hath much to give and they expect much. They love him, as he is mercifull and bountifull, as he is full and open-handed. As he opens out of his Treasury of goodnesse, deals out peace and safety, gives forth wealth and friends, compasses them about

about with kindnesse, fills up their Cup till it run over. But they go no farther in kindnesse, than he doth in bounty. They both measure and limit their love, by his goodnesse; and therefore if he turn the stream of mercy a little from them, their goodnesse and love dries up also. It may be they can be content to Pray and hear the Word, and perform the other offices of love, if they may get by it. *Assemble themselves for Corn and Wine*, as the Prophet speaks. But this is to do duty to mercy, to pray
to

to peace and safety, to love, not him but his.

And so the most do with God, as men do with those that are greater than themselves.

A great man because he is rich and powerfull, and can do much for them, to him they pretend a great deale of friendship, and shew of love; but if he once dry up in bounty, or stop in kindnesse, they are gone for new friends to reap new kindnesse; whereas if they loved the man for himself, their love would last so long as the person, not the purse or power
only

only remaind. And who would take such ones to be friends, that loved but so only ?

And so do you think to go for friends, when you come for nothing else ? Will God take you to be friends to him, when your love is only spun forth by mercy ? when it is only linked to peace and riches, or the like ? when your friendship is only planted and rooted, and grows in the soyle of his bounty, by the dew of his favour, and is not built upon him ?

You would not take
such

such a man to be your friend, that is a friend to your Chest or Table only. Yet God hath a great many such Chest, such Table friends, that are as great friends there as any; but if once the Purse is shut, the Cloth drawn, their friendship is taken away also. Whether then, can you love God stript of all considerations of kindnesse, so that you will not break with him, though he draw in his kindnesse, but keep him still though he had nothing to give; no Heaven hereafter to make you happy, nor peace

peace and wealth, and the like, to stay you here: 'tis then a sign you are his friend. But if you love him as he appears in mercy only, as he is covered over with kindness; it is a sign you are no friend of his; he that is a friend, loves not so much his as him.

2. Sign of friends.

Secondly, Another sign of friendship is mutual trust, to each other.

Whether then will you trust him, and may he again trust you?

First, Whether will you trust him? that is, will you take him on his bare

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bare word without any more? that is, to trust a man when thou relyest on him, for his bare promise. And so that is to trust God for a mercy, not when you have hold on him and the mercy too; one hand on him, another on the thing: But when you lay hold on him, with both hands, that his promise is all the hold you have.

Many will trust him when they have security; trust him for a mercy, deliverance, health or life: when they have a pledg, when they are in the way of deliverance, or life;
trust

trust to the staffe, when they have hold of one end of it ; whereas he that is a friend , will take his word as soon as his bond. Trust him against trust, against hope, As *Abraham* , because he was a friend of God, believed him (against hope) for a son, even then when in nature , and reason he could see no issue.

To trust him with a pledg, is no more than an enemy will do ; any man will trust so, only a friend will trust for the bare relation of friendship.

Again, Whether may God trust thee ? he that
is

is a friend, God dares
betrust with any thing;
betrust him with riches;
betrust him with health
or friends; betrust him
with greater things, even
with Jesus Christ, which
is all his stock of mercy;
and betrust with grace
also, because he will give
all, or the Revenues of
them to God again.

Other men, though
he gives them health,
or wealth, or the like;
yet he trusts them not
with them, as looking for
them again.

And therefore what
he bestowes on them, it
is given as an exercise of
F his

his bounty ; and not any exercise of their trust and fidelity, which is therefore some smaller matter that he gives , as these outward things which he looks not for again. Even as we deal with men that have oft deceived us, or are poor and needy ; if they come to borrow, we lend them not any thing we look to have again , because we dare not trust them ; but it may be, we give them something out of our bounty , for their need.

So much for this third Sign. The next is, *Whe-*

Whether art thou ^{4. Sign.}
espoused to Christ or
not?

If thou art espoused to
him, then

First, Thou likest him,
and lovest him better
than any other. As a
loving Wife, if you ask
her how she likes her
Husband; she will answer,
I care not what others
do, how they like him;
for my part, I like him
better than any other.

So the Spouse of
Christ in the *Canticles*, ^{Cant. 5. 9.}
when she is askt how she
likes Christ; what her
beloved is better than
other beloveds: saith she,

- Verf. 10. *He is the chiefest of ten thousand : that is, Let others say what they will, like or dislike, she likes him better than any in the world besides: For*
- Verf. 10. *He is white and ruddy, that is, he is perfectly beautifull for colour. And so she describes him throughout, summing up all in the 16. Verse, that*
- Verf. 16. *He is altogether lovely, that is, there is nothing to be seen in him, that is, any deformity, to hinder liking or love: but he is most comely. Other men, as the Prophet Esay sayes, though in another case, See no form or comelinessse*

comelinesse in him; but he is unto them, as a Blackmoore, that hath nothing sightly. All his grace and holinesse is unto them but as so much blacknesse, though it be his perfect beauty. And therefore let him come never so often a wooing to them, in his Word and Ordinances, he cannot get a promise, for they like him not.

Whether then doest thou like Jesus Christ, and like him above all others? if thou art espoused to him thou doest so. There are many that seem to like him, and

Luk. 14.
18.

make love to him in praying, &c. can be content to do something to have him; if they might have him with some ease; but they like him not better than any other, than a lust of pleasure, or gain, or credit. We see this in the Parable of those that were bidden to the *Marriage Supper*. God there offered his Sonne if they would have him. But they liked him not so well as the world, else would they have taken him, when God made them the motion of Marriage.

If

If thou then art Married to Jesus Christ, thou likest him and his love better than all the world. Therefore *Cant.* *Cant. 1.2.* 'Tis said, *His love is better than Wine*, that is, than all the excellency of the creature; that there is not any other Grape that yields such sweetnesse and comfort, as his love; no Grape of pleasure, or credit, or profit, in all the Vyneard of the world that is like it, to her Spouse-like-taste; but Jesus Christ is better than all, even as Wine exceeds all other liquors whatsoever.

F 4 What

What then is it that fills up thy heart, that takes up the chiefest place and room there? What is it sits highest and possesses the first room of thy liking, the top of thy love? Is it the world or is it Jesus Christ? Is every pleasure or profit a thing that takes thee up from Jesus Christ? that shuts him out of doores, or makes him stand at the doore, when they have easie entrance? Does the world stay, and lodge, and walk in thy heart, when Christ can have no room there? or if he get in, is he not admitted

mitted onely into some
common outward room,
when the world hath the
Parlour or chief room?
Does he not stay a while
only, when the world is
intreated and forced to
stay? Is not the world as
the chief of the house,
when Christ comes only
as a servant, for thy own
good and safety? If the
world gets thus all away
from Jesus Christ, art
not thou Married to it
and not to him? And
therefore if thou pre-
tendest never so much
love to him, and yet pre-
ferrest any thing before
him, thou art much mista-
ken,

ken, if thou thinkest
Christ thy Husband.
But

2. Sign of
a Spouse. Secondly, If thou art
near unto Christ, as the
Wife to the Husband,
then thou takest him for
better for worse, and
thou keepest him for
better for worse : every
Spouse does so if a right
Spouse.

1. Thou takest Christ
for better for worse, that
is, not only for his Crown,
but also for his Crosse;
not only for health and
wealth, and good report,
but for sicknesse, and
poverty, and evil report;
not onely for what he
hath,

hath, but for what he wants, to share with him alike in all conditions.

That which our Saviour Christ required of his Disciples, to *Take up his Crosse*; he requires also of every soul that espouses it self to him, to take his Crosse, is to take him with afflictions; and not only so, but with persecutions and death too.

Matth. 10.
38.

And herein he deals as a man coming a Suiter to a woman, tells her, this I am worth, and such and such like benefits you shall enjoy by me; but withall, you must

must take me with such an imperfection, want of a legge or limbe, with such a weaknesse and the like. So God deals with men, tells them of a Kingdom, and the Pre-rogatives of his Crown, (if they espouse themselves to him :) but with-all, they must take him with afflictions, sicknesse, poverty, losses and crosses; yea, with persecution and death, to take all into the bargain, and so the match is made up, not otherwise.

Every one is willing to take Christ as a Saviour, to take him with
peace

peace and riches, and a Kingdome. But art thou willing to take him, if he should not prove worth a Groate of worldly content? If thou shouldest never see any thing but a rough Sea of troubles, storm after storm, poverty after sicknesse, disgrace after poverty, imprisonment and banishment after them; and so as to saile all thy life time in this Sea, that all Gods waves should passe over thee?

Art thou willing to take him, (though as many tempests of wrath should fall upon thee as did

did upon patient *Job*)
and keep thee to him?
It may be thou couldst
take him with some one
affliction, but canst not
endure to hear of ano-
ther? But canst thou
take him, or hast thou
taken him with a willing-
nesse to loose that which
is most dear to thee? In
thy wealth it may be
thou likest such a match
as *Jesus Christ*, to have
him with house and land,
with a full stock, a gain-
full trade: But what
doest thou, or wouldst
thou do, to think on *Cat-
tle stolne*, or dying, thy
House spoiled, thy *Seed*
buried

buried and rotten in the ground, all cast away; thy Trade decayed, and worth nothing? Couldst thou now keep thee to thy Husband, when these things come by him, and not seek to raise thy self by unlawfull courses of deceiving and stealing?

Or if these were not so much, canst thou take him with losse of friends, most endeared to thee? losse of Parents, Children, yea, the Wife of thy bosome? Couldst thou be willing to have *Job's* boyles, and to scrape thee with a Pot-sheard? to loose all thy credit

credit and good opinion, of near friends and others, and so to be left without any staffe of worldly comfort to rest on?

But this is not all, canst thou take Christ with persecutions, to be mockt and scorn'd for righteousness sake? willingly bearing the worst of reproaches, (which the men of the world so warily avoid) and to bear the utmost, the malice and wit of men can impose?

If thou art rightly espoused to Jesus Christ, thou takest him for this
and

and more, to endure the utmost rigour of torture, that makes men by the only thought of it to tremble. Thou wilt take Christ with this willingness to endure any thing, and not make any exception. Even as a Wife which takes a man for love, takes him to endure any thing with him.

And as thou takest ^{2. Hold} him for better for worse, ^{Christ.} so thou holdest him for better for worse.

A Wife that takes a man out of love to him, she is not only willing to endure with him, but she
does

does it indeed. She forsakes him not, because he proves poor or sickly, (which are no causes of forsaking) or that men speak against him, but she holds against all such storms.

Many go so far, as to take Christ for better for worse, till the evil comes; but in the time of affliction, or persecution; because their match proves full of crosses, and because men speak against the match; because they revile and slander the wayes of God; they break away, and divorce

orce themselves from
their Husband Christ.
Which is for a Wife,
(because her Husband
and she find crosses in
their match,) to forsake
her Husband; whereas
if the knot were tyed
in a right choice and
affection, it would work
of (on such grounds) all
thought of forsaking:
So if the knot be right-
ly tyed between the
soul and Jesus Christ,
it would hold against all
the crosses and evils per-
secutions and deaths in
the world.

And therefore in the
8th of the *Canticles* and
the

Cant. 8. 7.

So Matth.
7. 27. af-
fliction by
rain, per-
secution
by floods,
as temp-
tations by
winds.

the 7th, it is said, *Much water cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it*, that is, All the evils in the world of afflictions (for so commonly they are shadowed out in the Scripture by waters) and persecutions (which ordinarily are tearmed floods) cannot drown or overwhelm this love, not wash it away, or bear it down. Afflictions cannot do it (though they if any thing) be as waters to quench it, and which quench the love of many false Spouses. But as the stone

stone *Asbestos* being
 once fired, can never
 be put out by any
 force, though it con-
 sume it self: so is it
 with this Marriage-
 knot, this heating of
 the soul by the love of
 Christ, when once it
 is hot by love, throw
 whole Buckets of affli-
 ctions, poverty, sick-
 nesse, shame; let fall
 whole showres of evils,
 continued afflictions;
 plunge it into a Sea
 of sorrows, the long-
 est and greatest pres-
 sures and trials: and
 this love will not out,
 but burn in the midst
 of

of the waters. This fire of Heaven is like the other fire of destruction that never goes out.

Nor yet can the floods drown it; floods are, both deep waters and violent waters, for those two things are included in a flood (beside water,) namely, depth, and violence of water. Some things cannot be drown'd, because the water is not deep enough. Other things, because the water is not strong enough by its force of running, to bear them down.

But

But when these two, depth and force meet in one water, that water of all others, is most likely to drown. So is it with evils, some evils are not deep enough to swallow up those that lye under them, and therefore they hazard not their love much: or if they be deep, yet not violent enough, but creep on men insensibly, and soe they keep some strength against them, that they are not overcome by them, as sicknesse coming more insensibly

bly and slowly , because not deeply rooted, is oftentimes wrought out by the naturall strength , or at least , not so troublesome to nature. Whereas those that are deep and strong to , overthrow the body , and lay it in the Dust : so is it with some men , they can endure afflictions, and many , but if deep and violent evils , as persecutions , (if not by the length , yet by the soarnewse and violence) they make the love of men to moulder

der - away to nothing.
Continuall shame it
may be, by ordina-
ry men, fellowes, does
but shake it : but the
deep reproach and vi-
olent injuries of great
one drownes all, by
taking away their foo-
ting, that hold they
had of Christ, because
it was not deeply
rooted ; so that they
which are not able to
stand againſt the floods,
but their love is drown-
ed quite and over-
whelmed in them, that
it riſes no more, are
no true, but falſe
Spouſes of Chriſt :

G**And**

And therefore to shut these two up together, we may see it in that of our Saviour, of the stony ground, which when tribulations or persecutions come are offended. The meaning of the words is this, That there are two sorts of men, which seem Spouses to Christ, and are not.

Matth. 13.
21.

Some that take him for better only, and not for worse, for when the worser, tribulations or persecutions come, they fall away.

Others

Others that have a little faster hold on him, but not in the right Spouse-like affection; for when persecutions come, (though tribulations did not shake their love) they fall away: for so the words are to be understood, that one of the two, either tribulations or afflictions divide them from their supposed Husbands, that they cannot stand against the floods. Whether then if thou canst stand against the Waters; yet canst thou stand

against the floods ?
Art thou so deep and
strong in love, as not
to be covered and
borne down by the
depth and violence of
persecution, for they
that are rightly es-
poused to Christ, will
hold him for better
for worse, yea, in
the worst that can
come.

Lastly, The last
signe of a right con-
jugall love is, to de-
ny all affection to a-
ny other that would
unjustly have it. She
that is a Wife, ty-
ed to her Husband in
a right

a right choice and affection, so as to take him, not by constraint, but purely from love, will let her love stirre to no other, than to him which is her Husband. So that soule which is rightly espoused to Jesus Luke 9. Christ, denyes her 23. selfe, of every Whorish affection to the world. For that is to deny our selves, when natural corruption would faine move too, and askes leave to go out, to the world, for the satisfying of that old selfe. But Spouse-like

affection sayes no ; you shall not move to pleasure ; you shall not goe to credit ; you shall not run to profit again : no , I am espoused to Jesus Christ, he it is that hath my love, I dare not give it to any other besides. Him have I given my heart, and I will keep it for him.

As a Spouse may have such motions, rising up to the beauty, and excellencies of others, (which otherwise she could like well enough,) but because she hath given him her love, she
rejects

rejects such motions, as not fit for her condition; so the soul that is espoused to Christ, may have such unchast motions rising up, to the excellency of the creature (which she otherwise could like) but because she hath given Christ her heart, she cast out such motions as the Sea doth dirt.

Doeſt thou then give way to false affections rising in thy heart, to prevent the love of Christ? thou hast no Spouselike affection, and so art no true Spouse. On the contrary, doeſt thou beat down all false loves; such affecti-

affections as naturally boyle up in thy heart, to the satisfying of the flesh, that old self? Doest thou give sin a peremtory denial, when it would carry thee away from Christ to the creature? it is then a sign the knot is tyed between thee and Christ, and thou maist take comfort in it.

Other signs from the other degrees of nearnesse might here be added, but these are the main.

If this unworthy Treatate may beget profit or acceptance, it is that I wish.

The

nearnesse to God.

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*The Lord Iesus Christ,
who is our nearnesse, joyn
our spirits nearer daily to
his Father, by his holy
Spirit, in faith and holi-
nesse, and preserve us
all to his eternal
Kingdome and
glory. Fare.
well.*

FINIS.
